World Forum for Democracy
STRASBOURG - 2013

"Rewiring Democracy: connecting institutions and citizens in the digital age"
Strasbourg, 27-29 November 2013

Challenge

The deficit of democratic participation is the symptom of disconnect between citizens and institutions. Social media and social networks make audiences directly accessible to politicians and activists any time, any place. They foster thriving interest-based communities but struggle to provide a platform for a broader democratic debate. They have fueled democratic revolutions and citizen protest movements, but can they be instrumental in enhancing representative democracy and everyday governance?

Method

The Strasbourg World Forum for Democracy 2013 will address the challenge of democratic participation through the method of appreciative inquiry. Instead of dwelling on the problems, so large and complex that they may seem insurmountable, it will showcase initiatives, experiments and ideas that offer a response and a way forward. Focusing on solutions rather than on problems stimulates creativity and the imagination and mobilises people "for" rather than "against". The Forum will provide an opportunity to review the achievements of existing democratic participation initiatives, the obstacles they face and their mainstreaming potential. It will also offer a platform for new ideas on democratic innovation to be critically assessed and built upon in an "open source" style by the community of leaders and innovators participating physically or virtually in the Forum.

Format

Throughout the Forum, **creative labs** will enable participants to **introduce already tested initiatives as well as new, untested ideas and prototypes** for enhancing citizen participation in democratic debate and decision-making. The lessons from these exchanges will be shared in plenary formats, to enable participants to get a better grasp of the full range of showcased initiatives and identify those that hold

the greatest mainstreaming potential. The most promising initiatives, voted by participants, will be given further visibility by the Council of Europe after the Forum.

All participants, regardless of their status or profile, will take places in the debates on an equal footing, as presenters of democratic initiatives, or challengers and discussants.

The total number of labs will be 20. There will be two series of 10 two-hour labs, each followed by a 90 minute "fair" allowing participants to exchange informally with representatives of initiatives.

Each lab will last for 2 hours and will involve between 80 and 120 participants. Labs will focus on a specific initiative which will be a starting point for the thorough examination of the potential (or real) benefits of ICT for citizen participation and the challenges and risks that participation platforms and models pose for democracy. In order to ensure an interesting and informed debate, discussants with backgrounds in politics, academia, activism, media and law will be invited to make short comments.

The purpose of the labs will not be simply to review the initiative but to help advance the knowledge and understanding of on-going change and advise the Council of Europe and member states on the action might be necessary in terms of standards, awareness-raising, capacity building or monitoring in order to ensure democratic sustainability in the digital age.

Labs

Title: POPVOX
Organisation: POPVOX, USA
POPVOX is a neutral, transparent advocacy platform with over 250,000 registered individual users representing every United States Congressional district and over 2,000 organisations' profiles. POPVOX begins with all bills pending in the UnitedStates Congress, displaying the statements of advocacy groups, trade associations and other organisations on the issues. Individuals can write an informed message to the Congress, which POPVOX delivers to the appropriate Congressional office, with delivery confirmation. All input is aggregated publicly so that the media -- and the people -- can "hear what Congress is hearing."

Title: Change.org
Organisation: Change.org, Translational
Change.org is the world's largest petition platform with more than 30 million Change.org users in 196 countries. Whether it's a mother fighting bullying in her daughter's school, customers pressing banks to drop unfair fees, or citizens holding corrupt officials to account, thousands of campaigns started by ordinary citizens have won on Change.org. Change.org provides the tools and the know-how to campaign for a cause, and by inspiring everyone to discover what's possible when they stand up and speak out.

Title: Citizinvzstor.com
Organisation: Civilizone, USA
There are countless government projects in the United States and around the world that are not completed due to lack of funding. These are projects such as building new parks, renovating neighbourhood pools and providing bike lanes - projects that governments want to take on and citizens want to invest in, but often can't. Crowdfunding focused on government projects are sprouting up in the

United States and abroad, giving citizens a direct say in where government spends their money for the first time in history. We are proposing a discussion of these platforms at WFD to be led by Citizinvestor – a crowdfunding platform for government projects in the United States. We will present the different models for civic crowd funding, along with a representative from Space hive (a similar platform in the United Kingdom.) and will lead a discussion on the biggest questions surrounding this new form of civic participation.

Title: Empowering local people and communities to monitor districts service delivery through use of ICTs
Organisation: Women Of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), Uganda
The goals of this initiative are to create awareness on the need of good governance and service delivery among the grass-root communities and local community based organizations in five districts of Northern Uganda. The aim is to improve their capacity in ICT skills, to enable them collect, package and disseminate information on corruption and poor public service delivery from their localities to the wider public, and to document and disseminate voices of the grass-root communities so as to raise awareness on corruption and poor service delivery.

Title: PortoAlegre.cc
Organisation: Lung, Brazil
PortoAlegre.cc is based on the concept of wikicity, designed to provide visibility for causes created by the population, promoting stronger citizenship, social commitment and shared responsibility. The platform operates based on the methodology of social intelligence, formed by four axes: Culture of Citizenship, Ethics of Care, Shared responsibility and Civic Engagement. Through these joint axes, the team responsible for PortoAlegre.cc mobilizes face-to-face and digital actions through social networks, volunteers meetings and events.

Title: Participatory Budget
Organisation: Municipality of Amadora, Portugal
The PB is an instrument of participatory democracy that is characterized by being universal and direct, allowing citizens to participate in the discussion of local public policies. It is addressed to residents and workers in the municipality of Amadora, who can present their proposals at public meetings in the Parish Councils of the county and/or through the Internet (website of the municipality). Proposals are selected based on criteria of relevance, contribution to strengthening social and territorial cohesion, which is a strategic objective of development of the city, and of economic and financial rationality.

Title: Connecting citizens through digital direct democracy
Organisation: Council of Europe, Centre of Expertise for Local Government
Thanks to websites run by local authorities, citizens in several major European cities are having more of a say in improving their city life. In Reykjavik, for example, citizens' ideas are processed on a monthly basis, and then sent to the city's appropriate special council for discussion and possible action. The municipality reached to unconventional citizens' groups and asked for support to redefine community priorities, create jobs and defy the impact of the financial crisis. Possibly to be combined with

Title: Loomio
Organisation: Loomio co-operative Ltd., New Zealand
Loomio is an online platform for community governance and collaborative decision-making, developed by a cooperative social enterprise in Wellington, New Zealand. More than 3,000 people in hundreds of groups in more than 20 countries are already using Loomio as early adopting beta-testers. Users range from businesses to community organisations, software projects and social movements, to local and

national government organisations. In New Zealand Loomio is working closely with local government, providing a tool for large-scale citizen collaboration with Wellington City Council.

Title: Networked Networks
Organisation: The Democratic Society, UK
This project's goal is to promote conversations between campaigners and activists and civic influencers such as school association chairs, parish councilors, and other people who are well connected in the Lewes District area in England (a mixed urban-rural district of about 100,000 people, comprising 41 towns and villages). In this way a "network of networks" might be created that can be a vector for better two-way democratic communication and action.

Title: It's all about Freedom
Organisation: Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Philippine Office
The initiative targets Filipino youth and activists in - and potential supporters of - political parties and NGOs. The campaign capitalizes on programs that generate participation, connote sustainability and trigger ripple effects. In addition, they aim to foster debate on different issues related to the concept of freedom, identify social and legislative restraints to freedom, and develop and promote policies to enhance political and economic freedom.

Title: RE-Inventing Democracy & Place-Based Development through Cogniscope II
Organisation: Institute of the 21st Century Agoras, Cyprus
In this initiative, different stakeholders use a science based tool to model the complex situation of the declining wine villages of Cyprus in Limassol. The digital software 'Cogniscope' contributed in generating 500 ideas by the stakeholders, which were all "pieces" of the complexity of the situation. After 9 co-laboratories of democracy, the root causes for the declined situation of these areas were revealed along with the new vision of change, as an action plan, expressed, understood, voted, and hierarchically set by the stakeholders themselves.

Title: CiviQ

Organisation: Aphelion/Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
The goal of CiviQ is to enable fair and transparent engagement of all social perspectives during consultations and deliberations on a policy issue in order to enhance the sustainability of the outcome. The process captures and analyses a broad stream of naturally expressed opinion on an issue (e.g. in newspapers, radio interviews, interviews, etc.) and those opinions expressed during consultations. A small number of participants are asked to subjectively evaluate the statements by ranking them in a particular grid. From this data they extract the main narratives or social discourses on an issue. During live deliberations this method is used to support visualization of opinion positions and changes during the course of the meeting.

Title: iHub
Organisation: iHub, Kenya
The iHub User experience lab has been using design thinking methods to encourage citizen participation in governance and open up the democratic space in Africa. Recently we were able to develop Uchaguzi.co.ke, a tool that allows local citizens to report on governance and/or electoral malpractice to keep the process honest, but also to help organizations like the Red Cross, the police and other emergency services respond to incidences. The information is citizen driven and that is the power of the

platform. Uchaguzi uses both a mobile application and simple SMS short code for citizens who can't afford a smart phone.

Title: Natalia project
Organisation: Human Rights Defenders, Sweden
Civil Rights Defenders launches a potentially life-saving personal alarm, the Natalia Project that uses GPS and social media to inform of a kidnapping within seconds. What makes the Natalia Project unique is the connection to social media. Within minutes after an attack has taken place, people around the world will know and be able to take action. The bracelet uses a mobile signal to notify of an attack and issues a real-time GPS location of the victim to civil rights defenders' headquarters in Stockholm and to 3-5 nearby contacts (so called shields), so that they can instantly act. Civil rights defenders then forward the information to social media followers who are also urged to take action.

Title: Liquid democracy
Organisation: Pirate party, Germany

Organisation

The Forum is organised by the Council of Europe in partnership with the City of Strasbourg and a range of international organisations, think tanks, foundations, and other partners from the public and private sectors.

Interested parties should contact Ms Irena Guidikova + 33 3 88 41 32 19, irena.guidikova@coe.int

Web site of the forum: http://www.coe.int/en/web/world-forum-democracy/home